3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1936) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

of this symbolism relating to occupations of males and females respectively, is obvious. 842

Many women bear children when they are away in the fields, but help at home is often given. The mothers of the wife and of the husband may not be present at the confinement. No childless woman may be near during the confinement or convalescence. The father may not be present or "the child would be ashamed to be born." Before and during her pregnancy a woman feeds her husband with a prickly plant which is mixed in his food; this makes him faithful to her. 844 [784]

The abdomen is bound after delivery in order to keep the uterus in position. There is a very small amount of bleeding after childbirth; in fact the flow of blood is quite finished in two or three days. The nearer the diet comes to that of the white man the greater the bleeding at delivery. A pregnant woman may not beat a drum, or she will bear a drum. A woman who sees the blood from circumcision of a male will not have any children.

When a female child is born, the umbilical cord is cut with a hoe to ensure that the female will be a good worker in the field. The cord of a male is cut with an arrow to insure good hunting. A newly born child receives a drink of beer, and a cord is tied round its waist. This is not for support; it is the string from which, much later, the lower garment hangs. Girls do not menstruate until they are fifteen or even seventeen years of age. During the months after first menstruation a girl advances rapidly from childhood to womanhood. 841

The medicines that women take to secure abortions are bitter. A woman will refuse quinine because she thinks it will cause abortion. It is certain that twins are welcome among the Ovimbundu, but there are special observances connected with their birth and death. A twin birth is not thought to imply dual fatherhood. Twins are called Njamba ("elephant") and Hosi ("lion"). Although twins are of opposite sexes each receives one of the two names. Njamba is the first born, and Hosi is the second to be delivered. The medicine-man holds a ceremony to cure the mother of twins. The afterbirth of twins is placed in two gourds and carried outside the village for burial by two midwives. The mother of twins must wear round her neck the horn of an antelope given by the medicine-man. She has to blow this when crossing a river, meeting a crowd of people, or seeing a hawk overhead. People laugh at her and in fun say that she is a pig or a bitch. "The woman says the same kind of words to them." Children may be adopted, but they never really 847 845 597

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1932) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

597 belong to the foster parents. When an adopted girl marries, half the presents from the husband are given to the natural parents, and the other half to the foster parents.

845 In a case of triple birth at Ngalangi two infants died at birth; the other succumbed after three months. In another instance a woman bore three children and in the vernacular of my informant "something which was nothing," but all died. In a third case of triple birth a woman had a boy and two girls. The boy died at the age of fifteen [126] years; the girls grew up and bore children. Albinos do not find it easy to obtain wives. I was told that an albino man at Ngalangi could not find a wife until he married a widow who had several children, because unmarried girls of his own age did not want him. One of the charms collected has to be worn by a woman who has triplets. The object is a rattle (*olusanga*), which the woman shakes when she meets any one. If she gave an ordinary greeting the children would die.

115 The greater part of this information was obtained at Ngalangi by interrogating women who were questioned in Umbundu by Mrs. McDowell. At Elende I asked my interpreter Ngonga to interrogate 843 his wife. According to Ngonga a woman must visit a female practitioner in the first month of her pregnancy. The face and the body of the pregnant woman are painted with red, black, and white spots. This means that she will have no difficulty in bearing children, neither will she have any sickness during the nine months of gestation. "When her belly hurts" (i.e., the quickening), the woman goes to the same female *ocimbanda*, who paints lines of white, red, and black across her breast.

751 The *ocimbanda* gives the woman a necklace consisting of a strip of leather to which two cowries are attached. Experience proves that such a necklace is difficult to buy. If the woman has a necklace of this kind which was worn by her grandmother, it is a very powerful aid to conception, a relief in painful menstruation, and a means of securing easy delivery and normal gestation. I could not find any trace of an idea relating to the entry of a soul, ancestral or otherwise, into the foetus.

841 *Ongunda* is the name for a disease of the genitalia; but Ngonga used the word to describe abdominal pain suffered by a woman who has had no children. By this I suppose he means painful menstruation. The curative root which is given is called *kapumbua*.

847 Abortion is never secured by mechanical means. The medicine (*ikwaka*) is made from the root of a plant that is boiled in water and

3: Ramkly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

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Kukululu or *nkululu*. These terms are applicable to my father's father's brother, my father's father's brother's wife; my father's father's sister's husband; and my mother's father (the reciprocal *ovokulu* describes the reciprocals, brother's son's son; husband's brother's son's son; wife's brother's son's son; daughter's son).

Mukulu. This designation, which is derived from *mui*, meaning mother, and *kulu*, an old person, is applied to my father's mother (reciprocal, *ovokulu ponge*, son's son). *Mukulu* also means my father's father's sister; my mother's mother; my mother's mother's brother's wife; and my mother's mother's sister (the reciprocal is *ovokulu* which equals the English reciprocals brother's son's son; daughter's son; husband's daughter's child; and sister's daughter's child).

This completes the second generation of ascendants.

NOTE: Nganga's wife uses the names *mukulu* and *kukululu* for those relatives of her husband to whom Nganga himself applies those terms. These relatives call Nganga's wife *ovokulu*.

TABLE D

(*See Table E IV and V, also Table F II, IV and V*)

SONS OF NGONGA'S DESCENDANTS

Nuvulu or *uvali* is my first-born son. Other sons are *ovolo*, meaning child. *Ovolo okuse* means a male child. *Ovolo okui* is a female child. *Uvali* also means a first daughter (the reciprocal for these terms is *tate*, meaning father).

Ovolonge means my child. I apply the word, not only to my own children, but to my elder brother's son (reciprocal, *tate*, father's younger brother); to my elder brother's daughter; and to my younger brother's son.

Ndalembo. The word is applied to my son's wife; my daughter's husband; my elder brother's son's wife; my elder brother's daughter's husband; and my younger brother's son's wife (the same word *ndalembo* is used for the reciprocals of these terms; namely, husband's father; wife's father; husband's father's younger brother; wife's father's younger brother; and husband's father's elder brother).

The foregoing classificatory system of relationship is not peculiar to the Ovimbundu, but is a cultural trait of many Bantu-speaking and some Sudanic-speaking Negroes. The similarity of the Umbundu system to those of surrounding peoples in Rhodesia and the Congo will be pointed out in chapters dealing with culture contacts. 601 171

When describing marriage rites reference was made to the fact that a wife goes to live near her husband's relatives; the system is therefore patrilocal. The limited family consists of husband and wife (or wives) with their children. The greatest number of wives observed in the family of a commoner was four, and in the family of a king eleven. A household sometimes contains adopted children, also domestic slaves (pawns) who are working to pay off debts for their maternal uncles. An extended family may include a grandfather and his wife, his sons, their wives and children, and his unmarried daughters, with classes and nomenclatures mentioned in the foregoing tables. 591 592 [591] [597] [561] 596

The phrase *epata lia tate* (or *alua*) means "family of my father" and includes all relatives on the father's side. The words *epata lia* 613

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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wife of Ernesto (6). Patrilateral 'father' to Paula (24) and Saviel (11). Affinally related to Mwehombo, a 'sister' of whom he had married.

Wayangu, paternal half-brother of Mwehombo, resident at Epalanga till the end of 1953, wife's father to Aspirante (1) had married a sister (not clear whether own or classificatory) of Lussse.

3. *Kinship and marriage in the village setting*

The foregoing tabulated information and the charts indicate the two main principles of integration in Epalanga, as in other Umbundu villages, the settling of individuals near senior kinsmen and the existence of a number of intra-village marriage ties.

For a clearer outline of village structure to appear, it is necessary to give a brief sketch of the contemporary kinship system which will be discussed more thoroughly in later chapters. This is cognatic, with little distinction between patrilineal and matrilineal kin, the elementary family being the basic household unit, the individual being permitted to settle with any category of kin, and a high percentage of preferential marriages.[1]

The right of settling where one pleases, as 'the heart chooses', is recognised even in children. Mineui, the 7-year-old son of Gonçalve (18), used generally to eat at the household of his father's sister Paulina, the wife of Joaõ (20). Gonçalve said about this to me 'He is very fond of his father's sister.'

While the traditional norm by which a man lived in his father's village is still remembered, at least by older men, a

[1] Childs (p. 58) states that it is permitted to marry a cross-cousin on either side, a sister's daughter, and a father's sister. My informants generally agreed that the marriage with a father's sister was not and had not been permitted. Marriage is not permitted with 'true' kin of these categories. Padre Feltin, the superior of the Bimbe Catholic Mission who knew of the existence of these marriages, told me that very few Umbundu marriages came within the prohibited (a prohibition removable by a dispensation) degrees of kinship laid down by the Catholic Church (that is, up to, and including, third cousins). Such marriages in the past might have been with geographically as well as socially distant kin. Childs quotes a case of a marriage arranged, after the discovery of a kinship tie, between partners living as far apart as Chyaka (Quiaca) and Ngalangi (Galangue).